

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, June 25, 1890, with transcript

Letter written by Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel (Hubbard) Bell. Parker House, Boston, Mass., June 25th, 1890. My darling Mabel:

Dreams sometimes come true — and I believe that my dream is on the eve of complete fulfilment. I have made up my mind to place an agate cement mould in the hands of a practical engraver — and have him attempt to print from it.

The first attempt will be to print from a mould taken from a photograph — representing Jacob's Dream! — an appropriate subject — and the next to reproduce copies of one of Theodora's Pen and Ink Sketches made in Bermuda.

I shall also attempt a print from an engraving Mr. Ellis purchased for me. The engraving is on paper and I anticipate that the lines in the mould will be deeper and finer than those from Theodora's sketch.

I am only awaiting the arrival of a large quantity of the agate cement material in order to make the moulds. In the meantime I have been experimenting with a small quantity purchased here at a Dental Supply store.

Miss Edith Jordan (Miss Fuller's niece) made a small pen and ink sketch for me upon celluloid — and from this a very nice-looking mould has been taken.

Another beautiful mould has been taken from a photograph of an engraving of Corregio's Madonna — the best mould made yet — but alas — alas — my heart is almost broken over it — something tempted 2 me to pour alcohol upon the surface of the mould — and

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my beautiful Madonna is ruined! The alcohol has destroyed the surface in places and only enough remains to show how beautiful the whole was.

I really am as much grieved over the disaster — as though the subject had been alive. Mr. Ellis will search the town tomorrow for another Madonna of the same kind — for I am myself “madonna”!!

If I can find another — and can make another mould as good as that now ruined — I will present it to you to be preserved in all its beauty — and will not sully the lovely face with printer's ink — or alcohol!

Just look at the picture in the center of the enclosed card. Does it not appear almost incredible that a mould could be taken from that — showing all the fine lines of the original picture — as indented lines on the mould?

And yet it has been done — we have such a mould here taken from a duplicate of the card.

I do wish that stuff would come from Philadelphia so that we can try a plate upon a large scale — and have an engraver actually print from it.

I must work this invention out at Beinn Bhreagh. The importance of it grows upon me — won't you help me? Here at last is a subject at which we can work together. You saved it — to begin with — so I owe it all to you. Won't you help me — and encourage me to work at it now.

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My work in the Past has always come between me and you — and tended to separate us — from lack of mutual interest in the things themselves — but here is a thing in which your natural interest should be as great as mine. The telephone, radiophone, graphophone, Induction Balance, etc., etc., — what have they been to you? — all sealed things —

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relating to the world of sound — but this invention touches your life as well as mine and will bring us together in a common interest.

You dear little wife — you have tried hard to show an interest in deaf-mutes and the Conservation of Energy — a queer mixture — hardly palatable to your taste — but here we have a subject that will not demand artificial interest on your part. The first print will be of Jacob's Dream. A stairway to heaven — and angels passing up and down — a peculiarly appropriate subject.

I love you very much.

Your loving husband, Alec.